



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING: February 28, 2008**

---

**PHA Conference Room**

**100 Broad Street**

**Providence, RI 02903**

---

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Waldman called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Executive Director called the roll:

**Present**

Paul Waldman  
Dolores Cascella  
Jaime Castillo  
JT. Taylor  
Dorothy Waters  
Robert Clarkin

**Absent**

Raymond Murphy (Excused)  
John Iglizzi (Excused)  
Hillary Silver (Excused)  
Nicholas Narducci (Excused)  
Barbara Fields (Excused)

Six members were present, constituting a quorum.

**RESIDENTS' COMMENTS**

There were no comments from residents.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January 24, 2008 and February 5, 2008)**

Chairman Waldman called for approval of the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Commissioner Clarkin moved approval of the minutes. Commissioner Waters seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the minutes approved. Chairman Waldman called for approval of the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Commissioner Cascella moved approval of the minutes. Commissioner Waters seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the minutes approved.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

PHA History Book and Event

Chairman Waldman stated that all of the commissioners have been given a copy of "A Community Apart: A History of Public Housing in Providence", written by Paul Campbell. The book covers the history of the PHA from its inception in 1939 up to 2004. It also tells of housing conditions in the city and nationally prior to the PHA's founding. There will be a reception and book signing celebrating the book on March 20, 2008, from 5:30 to 8:00 PM at the Conley's Wharf on Allens Avenue. It will be important for the commissioners to read the book and attend the event.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

No report was presented.

Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee

Asset Management Director Marv Carmody presented the report to be entered into the record. [See attached report]

Resident Services Committee

Maria Gianfrancesco, Special Assistant to the Executive Director, presented the report to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**Monthly Management Report

The Director informed the board that the Monthly Management Report for January, 2008 shows most of the indicators as positive. Financially the PHA is meeting its objectives, and, so far, there is a small surplus in the budget.

Occupancy has been excellent, averaging around 98.6% for the last couple of years. This is a very good rate for a Housing Authority of this size. Because of the way HUD is doing business now, we have had to vacate some apartments that were used for resident associations and health offices, and an emergency apartment here at Dexter Manor, to maximize our income under the new subsidy system. He invited the commissioners to call him if they had any questions about the report.

Attention to Articles in Board Packet

Each month one or more articles related to public housing will be included in each Commissioner's packet in order to provide Commissioners with information on housing issues. This month's packet includes the following:

- An editorial from the Providence Journal titled "*Secret Housing Lists*" about the fact that the federal privacy law keeps most waiting lists under wraps. They are editorializing that these lists should be public.
- A NAHRO press release about how the President's proposed budget is under funding housing and community development programs.
- An article from the NAHRO newsletter that includes the available details about the President's proposed 2009 Budget.
- An article from the New York Times, titled "*Providence Begins to See Its Future Around the Corner*", about the revitalization of the Downcity area centered around Westminster Street.

PHA History Book

The Director stated that the book is being used as a fundraiser. The PHA staff is being charged a discounted rate of \$20, NAHRO members are being charged \$25, and the price for the general public is \$29.95. We will appreciate any donation the commissioners can make. All of the money received for the books is going to our non-profit, the Providence Community Opportunity Center. None is going to the author.

VASH Vouchers HUD/Veteran's Administration

The Director informed the board about a new voucher program that will be administered by the Veterans Administration for homeless veterans. Known as VASH it provides vouchers in support of returning veterans who need housing and supportive services, and they would apply for 70 vouchers. He stated that he was approached by Michelle Malloy, who runs the Center for Supportive Housing, and Omni Development Corp about an old factory property in Olneyville that they want to convert into 120 units of housing. The Director was then contacted by HUD and asked to administer the vouchers for this project, which includes receiving an administrative fee. The program is only available in cities that have a Veteran's Administration Hospital or services. The vouchers can be project-based, or tenant-based. We are still awaiting process regulations for administering this program.

Energy Performance Contract

The Director stated that we ran into a roadblock with the financing for this program. The agreements have been signed and executed, but Bank of America is requiring us to have a \$5.0 million umbrella liability policy, which will cost us an additional \$32,000. We may be able to include this as part of the financing package, so it will not need to be paid out of operating funds. We can do that because we

will be getting one of the largest rebates ever in the State of Rhode Island from the energy company, probably in excess of \$500,000. We will be doing a press release on that soon.

#### Resolution 4161, authorizing a financial transaction and the filing of an application with HUD

This resolution deals with changes in the language HUD requires for the Capital Fund Financing Program package. HUD requires additional language in the resolution that was passed at the special meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup>, requiring us to pass another resolution. This resolution allows the PHA to issue not to exceed \$10,000,000 Capital Funds Revenue Bonds.

#### Survey of Organizational Excellence

At the board retreat a full presentation was given on the Survey of Organizational Excellence, where we survey our own staff. The Director informed the board that we have just completed the most recent survey. These surveys are anonymous, and we receive the data without the names of the employees who completed the survey. All of the scores are over 300, which is considered more positive than negative. The lowest score was for fair pay, and the highest was for quality and strategic. Our scores have been consistent over the years. The comparative analysis shows us compared to similar size agencies, agencies with a similar mission, and every organization that has participated in the survey. We outscored all of them. As compared to our previous surveys, for the first time in seven years almost all of our scores are slightly lower, but they are still very good. Kim will be analyzing the data broken down by department, and we will cover that at a future board retreat.

#### Final Budget Proration: 84%

The Director stated that we are projecting a surplus of approximately \$100,000, which isn't where we would like to be. We need to restore some of our reserve, which has been severely impacted by HUD's cutbacks on Operating Subsidy over the last several years. It's clear we will not be able to provide raises to our staff this year and may have to layoff the staff we returned to service after last year's layoff. We have to build up our reserve because in this year's unaudited financial report to HUD we are low on our "Expendable Months Available" cash flow indicator. We will be creating an improvement plan, but the reason for the low reserve is the low budget proration of the last few years. At the next board meeting we will discuss more of the steps we will be taking to bring up the reserve.

#### HUD 504 & FH/EEO Review

HUD will be conducting a review of our buildings and policies to determine compliance with 504 and FH/EEO regulations. The director stated that he has never seen them ask for so much information. Ron Torbik has been working on the project almost full time. They were originally coming for the on-site review in May or June, but recently changed the date to the end of February, although they haven't scheduled it as of yet.

The Executive Director stated that the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Housing Authority was approached by the HUD Secretary about selling a piece of land to a developer friend of the Secretary. The Philadelphia Housing Authority did not want to sell the land, and shortly after that HUD scheduled a 504 review. The Philadelphia Housing Authority is now disputing the findings of the review, HUD is withholding money from them, and the housing authority is suing HUD and the Secretary. HUD is now accelerating the 504 reviews at other housing authorities, possibly to imply that they were not singling out the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

#### Commissioner Survey

A commissioner survey was presented and completed at the board retreat in November. It was the first of three the Director wants completed for the PHA strategic planning process. There is a short survey to be completed at this meeting, and a longer one that should be completed in the next day or two and returned to the PHA in the postage paid envelope. These are all unique surveys that are very important to determine organizational strengths and weaknesses. There will be some questions that board members do not know the answers to, and identifying those is also important so we can determine areas where the board needs to receive more information.

Strategic Planning Process

The Director stated that we are near the end of the survey part of the process. We have had 14 focus groups of different constituencies in the high-rises and family developments. We have sent out surveys to more than 1/3 of the public housing residents, Section 8 participants, and Section 8 landlords. We have sent surveys to over 150 third-parties and all elected public officials in the city. We will be analyzing the data, the directors and managers are writing their internal and external environmental scans, and we are looking at ten- year trend analysis from the last annual report. We will conduct a brainstorming session soon with the staff, then with the board, to present the data and identify key strategic issues facing the PHA. Once that is completed, a goals management plan will be prepared to address the strategic issues the agency is facing in the next 3 to 5 years.

Annual Plan

The Director informed the board that they will be considering a resolution approving the new Annual Plan at the next board meeting. There are only minor changes from the previous version, but we will give a slide show presentation to explain them. If any of the commissioners would like a full printout of the plan we will provide it.

**RESOLUTION(S)**Resolution #4161

Resolution #4161 authorizes a financial transaction and the filing of an application with United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Commissioner Taylor moved approval with Commissioner Castillo seconding the motion. After some discussion a vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to discuss.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Waldman accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Cascella, which was seconded by Commissioner Waters, to adjourn the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

---

Beth Herosy  
Recording Secretary

---

Stephen J. O'Rourke  
Executive Director